IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1-90 and add the following new claims 91-157.

91.   A method for auditing access to, or other use of, a digital object at a first computer system, the method comprising:

obtaining a request to access or otherwise use the digital object;

granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object in accordance with one or more rules associated with the digital object;

storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object; and

determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored, and sending at least part of the stored audit information to another computer system remote from the first computer system.

92.   The method of claim 91, in which at least one of the one or more rules includes an indication of a number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

93.   The method of claim 92, further comprising:

in response to obtaining the request to access or otherwise use the digital object, determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

94.   The method of claim 93, in which determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used includes:

accessing previously stored audit information, the previously stored audit information containing an indication of a number of times the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used.

95. The method of claim 91, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises creating an audit record containing information relating to the access or other use of the digital object, and storing the audit record in a database containing one or more other audit records, the one or more other audit records containing information relating to one or more other accesses or other uses of the digital object.

96. The method of claim 91, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises creating an audit record containing information relating to the access or other use of the digital object, and storing the audit record in a database containing one or more other audit records, the one or more other audit records containing information relating to one or more other accesses or other uses of the digital object or one or more other digital objects.

97. The method of claim 91, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises creating an audit record containing information relating to the access or other use of the digital object, and storing the audit record.

98. The method of claim 91, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises updating previously stored audit information.

99. The method of claim 95, in which determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored comprises determining that the database contains at least a predefined number of audit records.

100. The method of claim 96, in which determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored comprises determining that the database contains at least a predefined number of audit records.

101. The method of claim 97, in which determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored comprises determining that at least a predefined number of audit records have been stored.

102. The method of claim 98, in which determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored comprises determining that the previously stored audit information has been updated at least a predefined number of times.

103. The method of claim 98, in which determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored comprises determining that the stored audit information exceeds a predefined size.

104. The method of claim 91, in which the remote computer system comprises a clearinghouse.

105. The method of claim 91, in which the remote computer system comprises a computer system associated with a creator of the digital object.

106. The method of claim 91, in which the remote computer system comprises a computer system associated with a distributor of the digital object.

107. The method of claim 91, in which the digital object is encrypted, and in which granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises decrypting the digital object.

108. The method of claim 91, in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to open the digital object.

109. The method of claim 91, in which the digital object comprises digitally recorded music, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to play the music through one or more speakers.

110.   The method of claim 91, in which the digital object comprises digitally recorded video content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to play the video content.

111.   The method of claim 91, in which the digital object comprises textual content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to display at least part of the textual content on a computer screen.

112.   The method of claim 91, in which the digital object comprises textual content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to print at least part of the textual content.

113.   The method of claim 111, in which the audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises an indication of a quantity of textual content that was displayed.

114.   The method of claim 111, in which the audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises an indication of a length of time the textual content was displayed.

115.   The method of claim 91, further comprising:
deleting the stored audit information from the first computer system.

116.   The method of claim 91, further comprising:
receiving a communication from the remote computer system, the communication being operable to cause at least some functionality at the first computer system to be disabled.

117.   The method of claim 91, further comprising:
receiving a communication from the remote computer system, the communication being operable to disable further use of the digital object at the first computer system.

118.   The method of claim 116, in which the communication from the remote computer system is sent in response to said remote computer system receiving said at least part of the stored audit information.

119.   A computer program product embodied on a computer readable medium, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed by a computer system, are operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

obtaining a request to access or otherwise use a digital object;

granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object in accordance with one or more rules associated with the digital object;

storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object; and

determining that at least a predefined amount of audit information has been stored, and sending at least part of the stored audit information to a remote computer system.

120.   The computer program product of claim 119, in which at least one of the one or more rules includes an indication of a number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

121.   The computer program product of claim 120, further including instructions operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

in response to obtaining the request to access or otherwise use the digital object, determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

122.   The computer program product of claim 121, in which determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used includes:

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accessing previously stored audit information, the previously stored audit information containing an indication of a number of times the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used.

123. The computer program product of claim 119, further including instructions operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

deleting the stored audit information.

124. A method for auditing access to, or other use of, a digital object at a first computer system, the method comprising:

obtaining a request to access or otherwise use the digital object;

granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object if permitted by one or more rules associated with the digital object;

storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object; and

determining that at least a predefined time period has elapsed, and sending at least part of the stored audit information to a computer system that is remote from the first computer system.

125. A method as in claim 124, in which the predefined time period comprises a period of time since audit information was previously sent to the remote computer system.

126. The method of claim 124, in which at least one of the one or more rules includes an indication of a number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

127. The method of claim 126, further comprising:

in response to obtaining the request to access or otherwise use the digital object, determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

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128. The method of claim 127, in which determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used includes:

accessing previously stored audit information, the previously stored audit information containing an indication of a number of times the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used.

129. The method of claim 124, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises creating an audit record containing information relating to the access or other use of the digital object, and storing the audit record in a database containing one or more other audit records, the one or more other audit records containing information relating to one or more other accesses or other uses of the digital object or one or more other digital objects.

130. The method of claim 124, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises creating an audit record containing information relating to the access or other use of the digital object, and storing the audit record.

131. The method of claim 124, in which storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises updating previously stored audit information.

132. The method of claim 124, in which the remote computer system comprises a clearinghouse.

133. The method of claim 124, in which the remote computer system comprises a computer system associated with a creator of the digital object.

134. The method of claim 124, in which the remote computer system comprises a computer system associated with a distributor of the digital object.

135.   The method of claim 124, in which the digital object is encrypted, and in which granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises decrypting the digital object.

136.   The method of claim 124, in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to open the digital object.

137.   The method of claim 124, in which the digital object comprises digitally recorded music, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to play the music through one or more speakers.

138.   The method of claim 124, in which the digital object comprises digitally recorded video content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to play the video content.

139.   The method of claim 124, in which the digital object comprises textual content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to display at least part of the textual content on a computer screen.

140.   The method of claim 124, in which the digital object comprises textual content, and in which the request to access or otherwise use the digital object comprises a request to print at least part of the textual content.

141.   The method of claim 139, in which the audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises an indication of a quantity of textual content that was displayed.

142.   The method of claim 139, in which the audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object comprises an indication of a length of time the textual content was displayed.

143.   The method of claim 124, further comprising:

deleting the stored audit information from the first computer system.

144.   The method of claim 124, further comprising:

receiving a communication from the remote computer system, the communication being operable to cause at least some functionality at the first computer system to be disabled.

145.   The method of claim 124, further comprising:

receiving a communication from the remote computer system, the communication being operable to disable further use of the digital object at the first computer system.

146.   The method of claim 144, in which the communication from the remote computer system is sent in response to said remote computer system receiving said at least part of the stored audit information.

147.   A computer program product embodied on a computer-readable medium, the computer program product including instructions that, when executed by a computer system, are operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

obtaining a request to access or otherwise use a digital object;

granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object in accordance with one or more rules associated with the digital object;

storing audit information relating to the access or other use of the digital object; and

determining that at least a predefined time period has elapsed, and sending at least part of the stored audit information to a computer system that is remote from the first computer system.

148.   The computer program product of claim 147, in which at least one of the one or more rules includes an indication of a number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

149. The computer program product of claim 148, further including instructions operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

in response to obtaining the request to access or otherwise use the digital object, determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used.

150. The computer program product of claim 149, in which determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used includes:

accessing previously stored audit information, the previously stored audit information containing an indication of a number of times the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used.

151. The computer program product of claim 147, further including instructions operable to cause the computer system to perform actions comprising:

deleting the stored audit information.

152. A method performed at a first computer system, the method comprising:

obtaining a request to access or otherwise use a digital object;

determining whether to grant the request, including checking one or more rules associated with the digital object, the one or more rules including an indication of a number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used;

determining whether the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used more than the number of times indicated by the one or more rules;

granting the request to access or otherwise use the digital object if the digital object has not been accessed or otherwise used more than the number of times indicated by the one or more rules;

storing first information relating to the access or other use of the digital object; and

sending second information relating to the access or other use of the digital object to another computer system remote from the first computer system.

153.   The method of claim 152, in which the first information includes the second information.

154.   The method of claim 152, in which the first information includes information relating to a user of the first computer system that is not included in the second information.

155.   The method of claim 152, in which the first information is the same as the second information.

156.   The method of claim 152, in which determining whether the request could be granted without exceeding the number of times that the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used includes:

accessing previously stored information, the previously stored information containing an indication of a number of times the digital object has been accessed or otherwise used.

157.   The method of claim 152, in which determining whether to grant the request further includes checking one or more additional rules associated with the digital object, the one or more additional rules including an indication of a time period during which the digital object is allowed to be accessed or otherwise used, the method further comprising:

determining whether a current time is within the time period.